

Rurouni Kenshin

The cover art features a large, detailed illustration of the main characters. In the background, a large orange-haired woman with a white headband and a black 'X' on her cheek looks intensely at the viewer. Behind her, a man with black hair and a white headband is partially visible. In the foreground, a woman with long black hair in a red kimono sits next to a young boy in a blue and white outfit. The background is a textured, reddish-brown pattern. The title 'Rurouni Kenshin' is at the top in a stylized red font with a black sword and red ribbons. The volume number '12' is in a large red font at the bottom right, and the author's name 'Nobuhiro Watsuki' is in a white font at the bottom left.

TM

SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL

Story & Art by

Nobuhiro Watsuki

volume

12



和月伸宏

NOBUHIRO WATSUKI

NAME DIVINATION

BEFORE I WAS PUBLISHED, I HAD A FRIEND OF MINE DO A "READING" ON MY NAME. BOTH MY REAL NAME AND MY PEN NAME CAME OUT TO THE EFFECT, "WILL ACHIEVE A PORTION OF SUCCESS, BUT WILL ALSO BE FOREVER LONELY." THESE DAYS, I'VE BEGUN TO THINK THEY WEREN'T TOO FAR FROM THE MARK. AS WATSUKI HAS NEVER PLACED THAT HIGH A PREMIUM ON HIS PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS (BLAMING THE BUSINESS), PERHAPS HE'S BROUGHT IT UPON HIMSELF. STILL, I'M GOING TO DO WHAT I CAN, MEANING THAT I'LL KEEP NEEDING YOUR SUPPORT, NOW MORE THAN EVER....

Rurouni Kenshin, which has found fans not only in Japan but around the world, first made its appearance in 1992, as an original short story in *Weekly Shonen Jump Special*. Later rewritten and published as a regular, continuing *Jump* series in 1994, *Rurouni Kenshin* ended serialization in 1999 but continued in popularity, as evidenced by the 2000 publication of *Yahiko no Sakabatô* ("Yahiko's Reversed-Edge Sword") in *Weekly Shonen Jump*. His most current work, *Busô Renkin* ("Armored Alchemist"), began publication in June 2003, also in *Jump*.



RURONI KENSHIN
VOL. 12: THE GREAT KYOTO FIRE
The SHONEN JUMP Graphic Novel Edition

STORY AND ART BY
NOBUHIRO WATSUKI

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PARENTAL ADVISORY
RURONI KENSHIN is rated T+ for Older Teen.
It contains violence, alcohol and tobacco usage. It
is recommended for ages 16 and up.



SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL



STORY AND ART BY
NOBUHIRO WATSUKI

Rurouni Kenshin™

MEIJI SWORDSMAN ROMANTIC STORY
Vol. 12: THE GREAT KYOTO FIRE

Once he was *hitokiri*, an assassin, called *Battōsai*. His name was legend among the *Ishin Shishi* pro-Imperialist or "patriot" warriors who launched the Meiji Era. Now, *Himura Kenshin* is *rarouni*, a wanderer, and carries a reversed-edge *sakabatō* to prohibit himself from killing.

Okuno Toshimichi, head of the government's "Internal Affairs," tries to hire *Kenshin* to assassinate *Shishio Makoto*, the successor to "*Hitokiri Battōsai*." But it is *Okuno* who is assassinated, and *Kenshin* sets out for *Kyoto* to find his killers. On the East Sea Road, *Kenshin* meets a girl named *Misao* and travels with her to a village occupied by *Shishio's* men—where he reconnects with fellow swordsman *Saitō Hajime*. There, they encounter *Shishio* himself, but the assassin refuses to fight *Kenshin* (because he is no longer *hitokiri*) and vanishes. Instead, *Kenshin* fights *Sōjirō*... shattering his *sakabatō*.

THUS FAR

In *Kyoto*, *Kenshin* stays at *Aoi-Ya*—an inn run by *Okina*, *Misao's* ex-Oniwabanshū surrogate father—and, to save *Seikū* (son of late swordsmith *Arai Hakkei*) and his family, is forced to battle *Chū*, a *Juppongatama* or "Ten Swords" assassin. Having been given the new *sakabatō* "*Shinuchi*," *Kenshin* goes to see *Hiko Seijūrō*, current master of his school of swordmanship. But *Seijūrō* refuses to teach *Kenshin* the ultimate *Iiten Mitsurugi* move, saying, "One who sides with any powers or parties does not deserve the secret." Just then, *Misao* leads in *Yahiko* and *Kaoru*... and *Seijūrō*, having been convinced by *Kaoru* that *Kenshin* has internalized the principles of *Iiten Mitsurugi* on his own, decides that he will teach him the secret.

Meanwhile, *Shinomori Aoshi*—spurred by *Okina* as a prospective spy—decides to take his information on *Kenshin* to *Shishio*. *Okina* tries to stop him, but *Aoshi* has rid himself of compassion and has turned into a kind of demon. With *Okina's* death, *Misao* proclaims herself *Okunshin* or "head" of the *Oniwabanshū*, swearing to defeat *Shishio* and his men... including her beloved *Aoshi-sama*. Elsewhere, at the police department, *Sanosuke* has contacted *Saitō* and together the two interrogate *Chū*, learning that *Shishio* is about to launch his grand scheme, which begins with the burning of *Kyoto*...



CONTENTS

RUROUNI KENSHIN

Meiji Swordsman Romantic Story

BOOK TWELVE: THE GREAT KYOTO FIRE



ACT 94
The Initiation Begins
7

ACT 95
Even If It Costs My Life
26

ACT 96
Between Life and Death
51

ACT 97
The Ten Swords Summoned
71

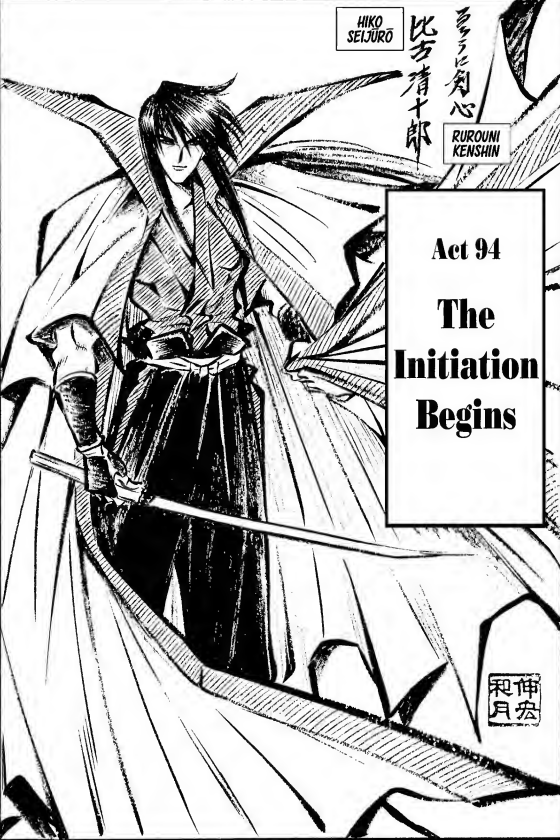
ACT 98
The Other Objective
93

ACT 99
As If in Flight
113

ACT 100
The Great Kyoto Fire (Part I)
133

ACT 101
The Great Kyoto Fire (Part II)
153

ACT 102
The Great Kyoto Fire (Part III)
173



HIKO
SEIJURŌ

比方清十郎

るろうに剣心

RURŌUNI
KENSIN

Act 94

**The
Initiation
Begins**

仲宏
和月





THERE
IS NO POINT
IN NAMING
MYSELF TO
THOSE WHO
ARE ABOUT
TO DIE.



YOU WERE
UNLUCKY, CHILD.
THE SHÖGUNATE'S
LAWS HAVE
BEEN LAX SINCE
THE ARRIVAL OF
THE BLACK SHIPS
TWO YEARS AGO.
MORE AND MORE
SELF-DECLARED
RÖNIN PROWL AS
BANDITS IN THIS
AREA.

ZK



SOME FATE
BROUGHT ME
HERE, AND I
HAVE TAKEN
REVENGE
FOR YOU.

BUT THE
DEAD WILL NOT
BE BROUGHT
BACK
TO LIFE BY
MOURNING
OR
HATRED.



YOU
SHOULD BE
THANKFUL
THAT YOU,
AT LEAST,
ARE ALIVE.

SUCH
THINGS HAPPEN
EVERYDAY,
EVERYWHERE,
IN TODAY'S
JAPAN.



IF YOU
GO TO THE
VILLAGE
AT THE
FOOT OF
THE
MOUNTAIN...

...AND
TELL THEM
YOUR STORY.
THEY WILL
CARE FOR
YOU.

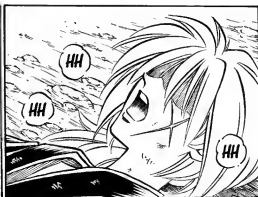


...I
REMEMBER
SOMETHING
FROM LONG
AGO.

HEY.
HOW LONG
ARE YOU
GOING TO
SLEEP?

YOU
SHOULD
BE UP
BY NOW.







...BY
LANDING
ONE BLOW
ON ME.

IT'S
TIME FOR
YOU TO
EARN YOUR
TRAINING...

ZZ

THE
PAST
BORES ME,
ANYWAY.





HIKO SEIJŪRŌ.
13TH HEIR
TO HITEN
MITSURUGI-RYŪ.

BY NATURE
HE IS CRUDE,
CRUEL, AND
HATEFUL.

MUTTER PLUS, HE
KNOWS THIS ONE'S
PAST, MAKING HIM
FAR MORE
DANGEROUS
THAN SAITŌ. MUTTER

DON'T
SAY THINGS
LIKE THAT...
EVEN IF
THEY'RE TRUE.

SMALL ATTACKS
WON'T WORK.
EVERYTHING
MUST HINGE
ON ONE, FULL-
STRENGTH, ALL-
OUT STRIKE!

HERE
GOES
...

HO.

...ARE
UN-
MATCHED.

HIS
SKILLS
...



飛天

HITEN...

御剣流

...MITSURUGI-
RYU...

み
つるぎ
りゅう



龍
槌
閃
!!!

りゅう

つ

せん

RYŪTSUISEN...
"DRAGON
FLIGHT!!"

...RYŪSHŌSEN:
"DRAGON-
HAMMER
STRIKE!!"

龍
翔
閃
!!!

りゅう

しょう

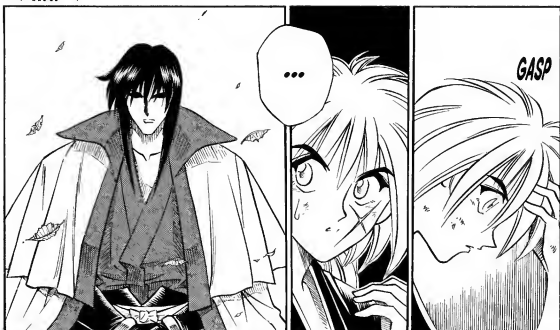
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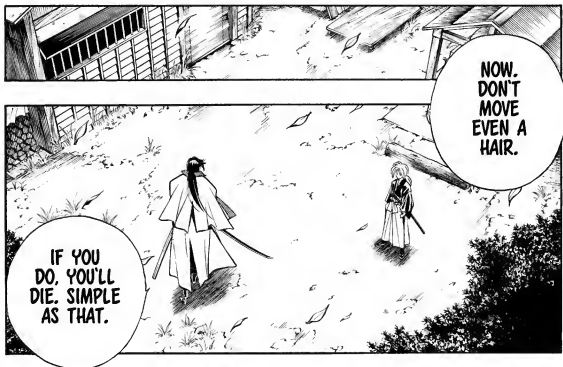


YOU
SHOULD
BE UP
BY NOW.

HEY.
HOW LONG
ARE YOU
GOING TO
SLEEP?









WHEN THE
"GODSPEED"
OF HITEN
MITSURUGI-RYŪ
IS USED TO
ITS FULLEST,
UNLEASHING
ALL NINE
STRIKES AT
ONCE...

...IT
CANNOT
BE
DEFENDED
AGAINST.





NOT A
FINGER
COULD
BE
MOVED...

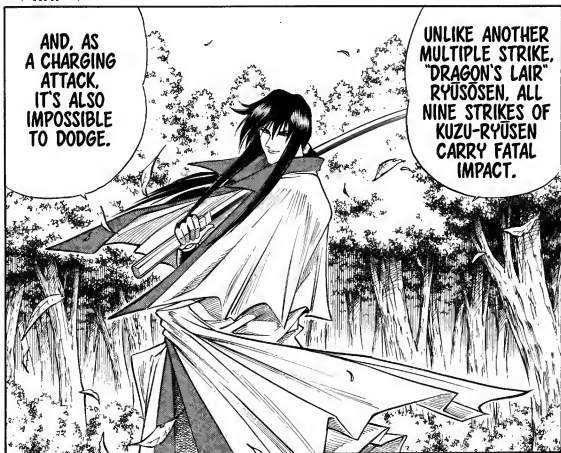


THIS
IS THE
SECRET!



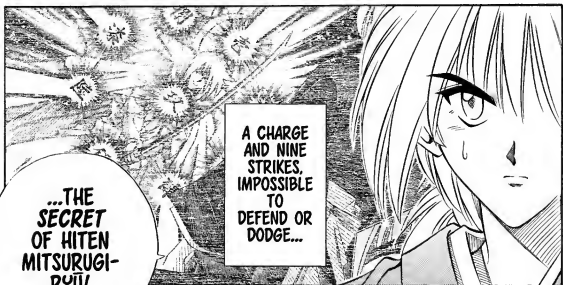
THIS
IS THE
HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ...

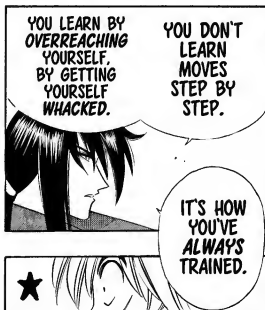
...KUZU-
RYŪSEN-
"NINE-HEADED
DRAGON."





Act 95
Even If It
Costs My Life







FULL-
ON.



...

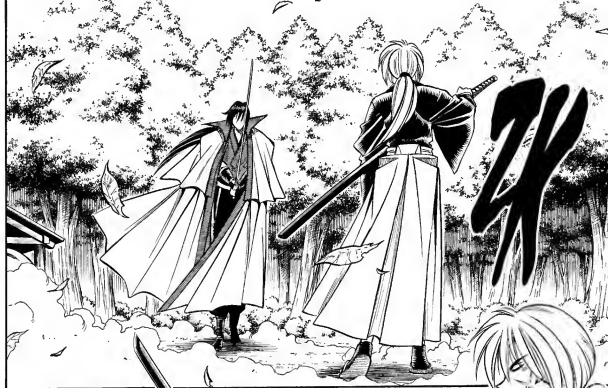


SO, IF
YOU THINK
YOU'VE
GOT IT,
BRING IT
TO ME.

Long time no see! Watsuki here. Since here is the only space we've got this time, let's get the usual nonsense out of the way.

- "Samurai Spirits: Zankurō Musōken"...my friend showed me it, I'm totally into "rasetsu-mode" Genjōrō!! Throwing-weapons ricocheting...triple spins in mid-air! I'm crazy about "SamuSupl." I can't get enough.
- I read the American comic, "Silver Surfer." I never thought it was for me, but it turns out it's a really deep story!! The Surfer is so classy...and so lonely. Everyone at work's passed it around. Give it a try if you have the chance.
- The "Spawn" toys from the American comic series are so far out there, they're great...especially the 13-inch figure. That one's so cool, I keep it on my desk, rather than on the display shelf. I hope McFarlane Toys can keep it up. Hurray for the toy biz!
- A serious topic for a change. My personal relationships lately have been pretty unstable. Usually, the problem's with me, but sometimes it's the other person, and that depresses me. I've started thinking about responsibility—it's hard to explain what I'm getting at, but I think about AIDS being spread by medication, or a cult like Aum [Shinri-kyō]. People don't take responsibility for what they do. I can't fix other people, but as an individual, I'm trying to be as aware as I can.
- My replies to your fan letters have ground to a complete halt, I'm so sorry about that. I am reading them, at least, so I hope you'll hang in there with me (and here I was just going on about responsibility, too).

See you next volume!



...BUT NOT
BECAUSE
THE
STRIKES
WEREN'T
SEEN.

IT'S TRUE
DODGING
WAS
IMPOSSIBLE
...

...WERE
CLEARLY
VISIBLE.

ALL
NINE
STRIKES
...

...KUZU-
RYŪSEN—
NINE-HEADED
DRAGON!

HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ...



THAT
DID
IT....!

BLUNT







WHAT
WAS
WRONG
WITH
IT?

NOTHING.
YOURS
WAS
PERFECT.

...BUT
STILL
IT
WAS A
FAILURE.

NNG

SAME
"KUZU-
RYUSEN"
...

TK

IN
BOTH
AREAS,
YOU'RE
INFERIOR.

MULTIPLE
STRIKES
DEPEND
ON ARM
STRENGTH.
CHARGES
DEPEND
ON WEIGHT.

...IF THE
WIELDER IS
DIFFERENT,
THE FORCE
WILL BE
DIFFERENT.

BUT
EVEN WHEN
THE MOVE
IS *EXACTLY*
THE SAME...

...*YOUR*
"NINE HEADS"
ARE
NOTHING.

SO, WHEN
YOU FACE
MY KUZU-
RYÜSEN...

BUT
THERE IS
ONE MOVE
THAT CAN
DEFEAT
MINE...

...AND
ONLY
ONE.

AH.

THEN
...

...THE
KUZU-
RYÜSEN
CAN
NEVER
...!



WHAT
?!

WHY
THE
SURPRISE
?



DID I EVER
SAY THAT
KUZU-RYŪSEN
WAS THE
SECRET?



...TRICKED
AGAIN.

HEH

WHY
YOU...!

AND IT'S
THAT WHICH
IS THE
TRUE HITEN
MITSURUGI-RYŪ
SECRET—

AMAKAKERU
RYŪ NO
HIRAMEKI—
DRAGON
FLIGHT OF
HEAVEN.

KUZU-
RYŪSEN WASN'T
CREATED FOR
BATTLE, BUT
AS A TEST FOR
THE INITIATION
INTO THE
SECRET.

THE
INITIATE
TRADITIONALLY
FACES IT
FIRST...

THE
"AMAKAKERU
RYŪ NO
HIRAMEKI"
WILL
APPEAR.

THINK
HARD
ABOUT
THE
NATURE
OF KUZU-
RYŪSEN.

BUT...

...HE
WILL BE
CONSIDERED
READY
FOR THE
SECRET.

...AND,
IF HE CAN
OVERCOME
HIS
MASTER'S
NINE
DRAGONS
...

THE
NATURE
OF KUZU-
RYŪSEN
...





TO DEFEAT
IT...IT
MUST BE
COUNTERED
WITH
BATTOJUTSU,
BEFORE IT'S
DELIVERED.

...IS THAT OF
A MOVE THAT
CAN'T BE
BLOCKED OR
DODGED.

THAT IS
THE TRUE
SECRET OF
THE DRAGON
FLIGHT OF
HEAVEN.

AS FAST
AS IT IS,
YOUR
BATTOJUTSU
MUST BE
FASTER
STILL.

EXACTLY
RIGHT.

...VERY
GOOD.



















THEY
WERE
SLAVERS,
NOT
PARENTS.



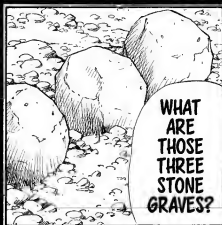
NOT
ONLY
YOUR
PARENTS
...

...BUT
FOR
THE
BANDITS,
TOO.



...DIED
OF
CHOLERA
LAST
YEAR.

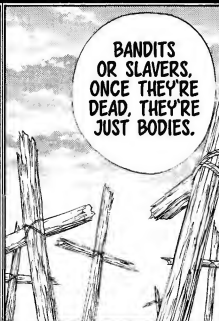
THE
PARENTS
...



WHAT
ARE
THOSE
THREE
STONE
GRAVES?



STILL,
YOU
MADE
GRAVES
FOR
THEM.



BANDITS
OR SLAVERS,
ONCE THEY'RE
DEAD, THEY'RE
JUST BODIES.



ALL THREE
FORCIBLY TAKEN
FROM THEIR
PARENTS AS
PAYMENT FOR
DEBTS.

KASUMI-SAN,
AKANE-SAN,
SAKURA-SAN.



SO I
THOUGHT,
EVEN IF
IT COSTS
MY LIFE...

...I'LL
HAVE TO
PROTECT
THEM.



I ONLY KNEW
THEM FOR A DAY,
BUT I WAS THE
ONLY ONE HERE,
AND I HAVE NO
PARENTS.



I LOOKED FOR
FLOWERS TO
OFFER, BUT I
COULDN'T FIND
EVEN ONE.

...I COULDN'T
FIND THE
RIGHT STONES
TO MAKE A
NICE GRAVE
FOR THEM, LIKE
I WANTED.

BUT...



A GOOD
SAKE IS
THE LEAST
I CAN
DO.



KPOK



TUK

TUK

MAN OR WOMAN,
TO ATTAIN
BUDDHAHOOD
WITHOUT KNOWING
THE TASTE OF
GOOD SAKE IS
A CRIME.



FROM
NOW ON,
YOUR NAME
IS TO BE
"KENSHIN."

FOR
KENKAKU
OR "SWORD-
ARTS,"
THAT'S
FAR TOO
GENTLE.



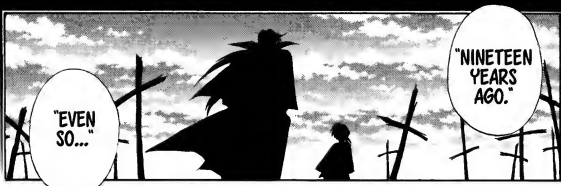
SHINTA.

WHAT IS
YOUR NAME,
BOY?



...MY
MOST
PRECIOUS
KNOWLEDGE.

I SHALL
ALSO
GIVE
YOU...



"EVEN
SO..."

"NINETEEN
YEARS
AGO."



...TOMORROW
WILL SEE
THE END OF
THAT LIFE.

...WHETHER
THE
INITIATION
IS
SUCCESSFUL
OR NOT...

Rurouni Kenshin





Act 96
Between Life
and Death



THAT'S
DANGEROUS.
DAYDREAMING
BY THE
WINDOW.



NOT
MISAO...
OKASHIRA!

NO,
NO!

TSK
TSK

MISAO-
CHAN...

YOU
NEVER KNOW
WHEN THE
ENEMY WILL
TARGET
YOU.



...HIMURA
COMES
BACK SOON
WITH THIS
"SECRET."

I
HOPE
...





...EVEN
IF HE DOES
BECOME A
BETTER
SWORDSMAN
...

...EVEN
IF HE
DOES GET
STRONGER.



YES...
BUT...



OH. NO.

NO.
NO.

I'M SORRY.
YOU'VE
YOUR OWN
WORRIES.

WHEN
I
THINK
OF...



...AND
EVEN IF
THE FIGHT
AGAINST
SHISHIO IS
EASIER
WITH THIS
POWERFUL
SECRET...

...THE REAL
BATTLE
WILL BE
INSIDE HIM,
BETWEEN THE
SOUL OF A
HITOKIRI AND
HIS VOW NOT
TO KILL.

...THAT
...



ME, AT
LEAST,
YOU
DON'T...

...HAVE
TO
WORRY
ABOUT.



Act 96

Between Life and Death



TWEE
TWEE
TWEE

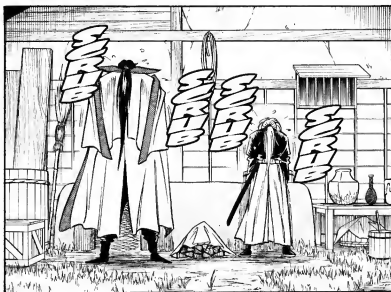


...YOU
EITHER.

DUNN

YOU
DIDN'T
SLEEP
LAST
NIGHT.

GLOOM









ALONG WITH THE
NAME "HIKO
SEIJURŌ," THIS
WHITE CLOAK, TOO,
IS PASSED DOWN.



...ITS SHOULDERS
ARE RIGGED WITH
SPRINGS WHICH
APPLY COUNTER-
PRESSURE IN
THE AMOUNT OF
TEN KAN*.



TO RESTRAIN IN
TIMES OF
PEACE THE
POWER OF
THE HITEN
MITSURUGI
INHERITOR...

*TEN KAN=37.5 KG.

FINALLY...



...HE'S
HERE.

...KENSIN?

ARE
YOU
READY
...





...HIKO
SEIJŪRŌ.

THE
TRUE
...



...WHO
SCARES
YOU
SO?

IS IT
HIKO
SEIJŪRŌ
...

MY
LEFT
HAND
...

...IT'S
TREMBLING
...

!

NO
FEAR.

SINCE LIVING
THROUGH THE
CHAOS OF THE
BAKUMATSU, I'VE
BEEN PREPARED
FOR IT.

...MY
LIFE.

I MUST
HAVE THE
SECRET,
EVEN IF
IT COSTS...

...FOR THE
COMING
OF THE
NINE-
HEADED
DRAGON.

PREPARE
YOURSELF
...

...

FOR
BEHIND HIM,
TRULY, IS

DEATH.





...ALL
BECAUSE
YOU
WONT
ASK
FOR
HELP!

I WON'T
LET YOU
GET AWAY
WITH
BEING
MISERABLE
...

I'LL BE
WATCHING...
FROM
HELL!

HOW
LONG
CAN YOU
KEEP
UP
THIS
RUROUNI
ACT?

THE REST,
HIMURA
BATTOSAI, I
LEAVE TO
YOU.

UNTIL I
MYSELF
KILL
YOU...

PLEASE
DON'T
FORGET
THAT.

ALL YOUR
FRIENDS
ARE
HOPING
FOR
YOUR
SAFETY.

...DON'T
LET
ANYONE
BEAT ME
TO IT.

FOR THE
PEOPLE OF
THIS COUNTRY,
HIMURA...GO
TO KYOTO
ONCE MORE.

FROM HERE
ON, CHAOS
WILL
DESCEND
ON JAPAN.

IT'S THE
RUROUNI I
WANT TO
STAY...

DAMMIT...
I WANT
TO BE
STRONGER
...!

DON'T YOU GO
WANDERING
OFF WITHOUT
MY SAY--SO.
GOT THAT?

EH,
KENSHIN
?

...I
GLADLY
CHOOSE
THE
GALLONS
INSTEAD.
THANK YOU!

IF I'M
TO BE
USED AS
A BAR-
GAINING
CHIP
AGAINST
KEN-
SAN...

KENSHIN!!



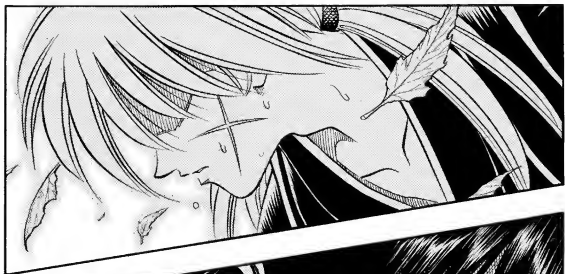
**I
CAN'T
...**

**I
CAN'T
...**

...DIE.

**...EVEN
THINK
TO DIE
YET!**





YES...
THAT'S
IT.

SHH
SHH



YOU BLIND
YOURSELF TO
THE FACT THAT
YOUR OWN
LIFE IS ALSO
A HUMAN
LIFE.



YOU'VE
KILLED MANY
MEN. YOU
CARRY MUCH
GUILT.

SO YOU
TAKE YOUR
OWN LIFE
LIGHTLY.



...AND SOMETIMES
ALLOWS THE
HITOKIRI WITHIN
YOU TO REGAIN
CONTROL.

THAT STOPS
YOU FROM
EXERTING
YOUR TRUE
STRENGTH...



YOU
NEED THE
WILL TO
LIVE.



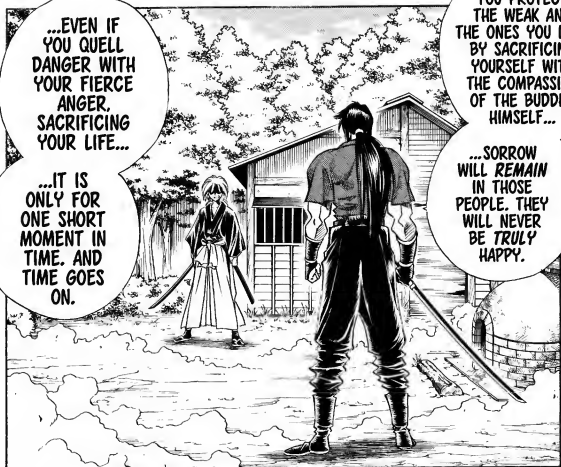
IF YOU'RE
TO OVERCOME
THIS, YOU
NEED TO
REMEMBER
WHAT YOU
JUST SAW.

...EVEN IF
YOU QUELL
DANGER WITH
YOUR FIERCE
ANGER,
SACRIFICING
YOUR LIFE...

...IT IS
ONLY FOR
ONE SHORT
MOMENT IN
TIME. AND
TIME GOES
ON.

EVEN IF
YOU PROTECT
THE WEAK AND
THE ONES YOU LOVE
BY SACRIFICING
YOURSELF WITH
THE COMPASSION
OF THE BUDDHA
HIMSELF...

...SORROW
WILL REMAIN
IN THOSE
PEOPLE. THEY
WILL NEVER
BE TRULY
HAPPY.



WITH IT, YOU
WILL DEFEAT
NOT ONLY
SHISHIO, BUT
THE HITOKIRI
WITHIN YOU.

REMEMBER
IT, AND THE
AMAKAKERU
RYU NO
HIRAMEKI IS
YOURS.

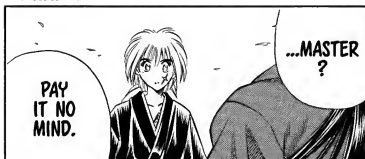
THE WILL
TO LIVE
IS THE
HEART OF
EXISTENCE.

DO NOT
FORGET
THAT.

MASTER
...

GLINT





Rurouni Kenshin



**MASTER
!!**



I, TOO,
LEARNED
THAT FACT
AT THE
EXPENSE OF
MY MASTER'S
LIFE.

AMAKERU
RYŪ NO
HIRAMEKI IS
THE STRONGEST
MOVE OF
HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ.

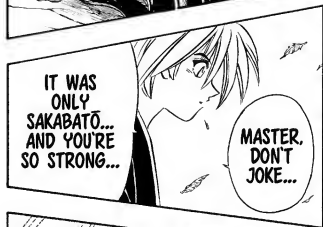
THE REST
IS UP TO
YOU, AS...
RURONI.



THIS IS
ALL I CAN
TEACH...AS
THE MASTER
OF
MITSURUGI.

Act 97

The Ten Swords Summoned



**YOU
CAN'T
DIE!**

KLANG

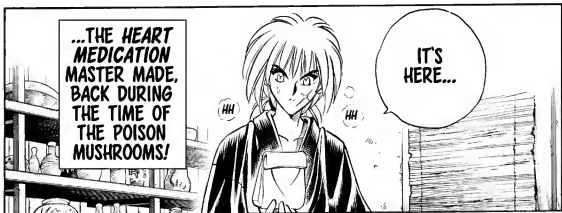
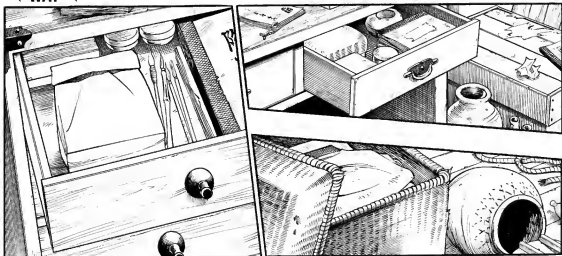
ZK

**IT
ISN'T
ALLOWED
FOR YOU
TO DIE!!**

仲宏
和月

Act 97
**The Ten
Swords
Summoned**





MASTER!!





I'M
HOME...

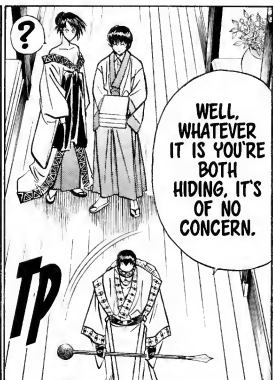


...THERE
YOU
ARE!









GEH.

HEY.
KAMATARI-
SAN.

!

SŌ-CHAN!
HEY!
LONG
TIME
NO
SEE!

UH-
HUH...

GLINT

AND
YUMI-SAN.
SAME TO
YOU.

ABSOLUTELY!
I'M FOR SURE
NOT LOSING
TO A MAN.

IF
YOU
ARE A
MAN.

HEH
HEH

THIS TIME,
WE'LL SETTLE
WHO WINS
SHISHIO-SAMA'S
HEART FOR
SURE.



ELDER
SAIZUCHI.

NYEH
HEH
HEH

NYEH-
HEH-HEH-
HEH.
YOUTH IS
SUCH A
LIVELY
TIME.



YOUTHS
THESE
DAYS,
EH?

NOT ONLY
WILL THEY
NOT TALK
TO ME. THEY
WON'T EVEN
LOOK AT
ME.



GLAD
TO SEE
YOU ARE
DOING
WELL.



OH
YEAH? AND
WHERE
IS YOUR
PARTNER?

WHO,
FUJI?
HE'S
OUTSIDE...



THEY'RE
ALL
JUST
JEALOUS
OF MY
POWERS.

TCH



HEH.
YOU'RE
THE ONLY
ONE WHO
SAYS
SO.









"GREAT
SCYTHE"
KAMATARI

THOSE
WHO
ADMIRE
ME.

"BLIND
SWORD"
USUI

THOSE
WHO
WANT TO
KILL
ME.

"HEAVEN'S
SWORD"
SŌJIRO



"OGRE"
IWANBŌ

THOSE
WHO
DESPAIR
OF THE MEIJI
GOVERNMENT.

"ALL-
KNOWING"
HŌJI

THOSE
WHO HAVE
COMPLETE
CONFIDENCE
IN THEIR
STRENGTH.

"CARE-
TAKER"
YUMI

"ANGRY
GOD"
ANJI



"DESTROYING
YAN" FUJI

"DESTROYING
YIN"
SAIZUCHI

...THE
TIME HAS
FINALLY
COME TO
STAND UP
TOGETHER.

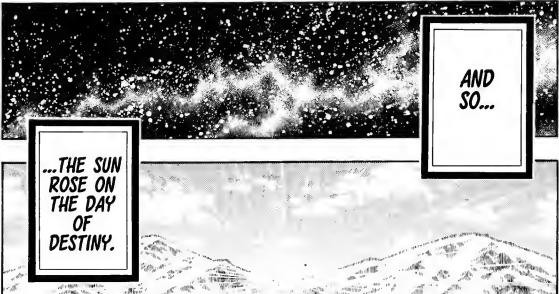
THOUGH
OUR
REASONS
VARY...

"FREE
FLIGHT"
HENYA



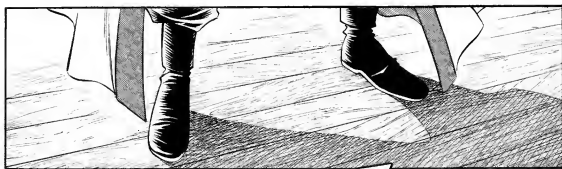
**...WE WILL
MAKE THE
GREAT
KYOTO
FIRE A
REALITY.**

**TOMORROW,
JUST
BEFORE
MID-
NIGHT...**



**...THE SUN
ROSE ON
THE DAY
OF
DESTINY.**

**AND
SO...**





**DON'T
YOU HAVE
PEOPLE
WAITING
FOR YOUR
RETURN?!**

**QUIT
WASTING
TIME AND
GET OFF THE
MOUNTAIN!**





LOOK HERE. THE STAY
PIN HAS COME OUT
TO THE POINT WHERE
THE BLADE'S ALMOST
LOOSE ENOUGH TO
COME OUT.

SAKABATŌ
SHINUCHI!

SS

IF I
HAD
TO
GUESS
...

...IT'D
BE
THIS
SWORD.

THE
POWER OF
AMAKAKERU
RYŪ NO
HIRAMEKI WAS
ABSORBED BY
THE BLADE
JUST ENOUGH
TO WEAKEN
IT.

...THAT
CONSIDERS
ITS
WIELDER'S
FEELINGS.

IT IS
A GREAT
SWORD
INDEED...

SHAKKŪ-
DONO...

GLINT

OF COURSE, IT
WAS MY PERFECT
TRAINING THAT
MADE IT POSSIBLE
FOR ME TO STRIKE
YOUR SWORD AT THAT
EXACT POINT.



...AND
GET BACK
TO THE
PEOPLE
WAITING
FOR YOU.

NOW,
QUIT WASTING
TIME, LEAVE
THE
MOUNTAIN...

The Secret Life of Characters (32)

—Hiko Seijūrō—

Personality-wise, there's no model. When Watsuki sat down to imagine what sort of guy the "Master" might be, the character at first became this arrogant, twisted guy. As one of my favorites, I actually wanted to give the guy more appearances...but then again, he *is* stronger than Kenshin and, as my editor puts it, "(The Master) is like the Joker in a card deck." In other words, he's just too powerful—it's hard to find a place to use him.

This is a little off-topic, but lately Watsuki has found himself fascinated by images of "manliness," and Hiko is one of the first characters to reflect that fascination. The drinking scenes come from Watsuki's own low tolerance for alcohol, and because Watsuki sees a sort of manliness in the image of a man drinking alone (not that Hiko is a drunk). There've been lots of questions lately asking if this Hiko is related to the Hiko Seijūrō in "Crescent Moon of the Warring States," but as Hiten Mitsurugi-ryū is passed on through potential, and not blood, there's no *biological* relation, no.

The Hiko Seijūrō of "Crescent Moon" is the model design-wise (of course), but I also threw in a bit of "Hiken Majin Hammer" from Master Obata's "Arabian Lamp Lamp" (Obata-shishō, forgive me!).

In setting the character within the context of "RuroKen," I ended up simplifying his design, such as fixing his hair to be easier to draw. What with his being a completely different type of Hiten Mitsurugi-ryū swordsman, and with the above-mentioned "manliness" as well, his body became a *nacho* one. If there are female fans who liked the face but not so much the body, sorry about that! (Still, if every new character was "just another good-looking guy," how interesting would that be? Watsuki knows *he* wouldn't enjoy it....)

As for the cloak...okay, yes...there's a bit of the American comic "Spawn" in it.



THANK
YOU FOR
EVERYTHING.

WELL,
MASTER...

HOLD
ON.

YOU'VE
EARNED
IT.

TAKE
IT.

THE WHITE CLOAK
PASSED DOWN
TO EACH NEW
GENERATION...

...IS
LIKE A
SYMBOL FOR
THE INHERITOR
OF HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ.

POH

ES

Act 98—The Other Objective



I
MUST
DECLINE.

EX-
CUSE
ME!!

LOOKS
AWFUL
ON ME
ANYWAY.



IMAGINED...

予想圖

完成

...RESULT

Looooom



...ARE
HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ
TEACHINGS.

ALL I
INTEND
TO
KEEP...



SELFISH
AS EVER,
I SEE.



I'M SORRY,
MASTER, BUT
I'VE NO
INTENTION OF
BECOMING THE
14TH "HIKO
SEIJURŌ"...

...OR OF
CARRYING
ON HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ.

WHILE I
FIGHT AGAINST
SHISHIO'S MEN,
WILL YOU
PROTECT...

SELFISH
OR
NOT...

...I'VE
ONE
MORE
REQUEST.

WELL...

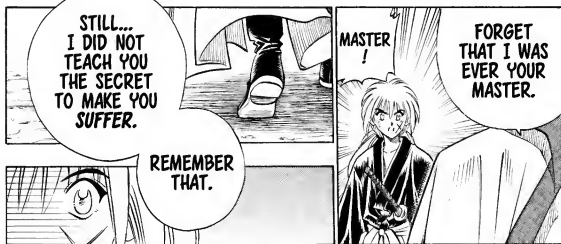
...MY
FRIENDS
AT
AOI-YA?

...I
DON'T
SUPPOSE
I
SHOULD
BE
SURPRISED.



MASTER
?

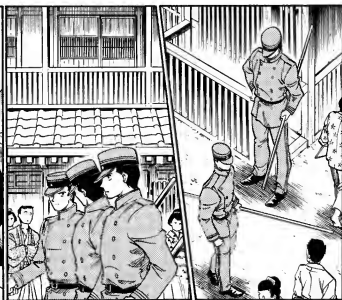
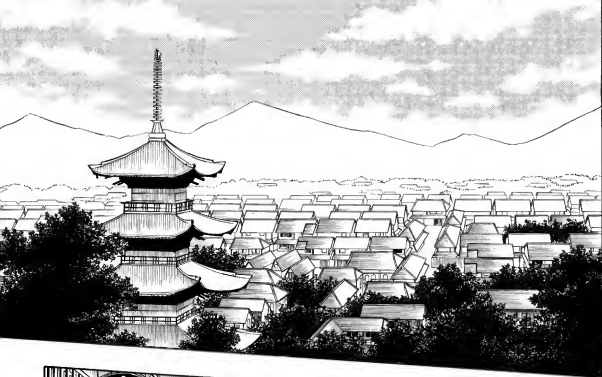
HUH.





Act 98
The
Other
Objective

和伸
月宏





I WOULDN'T ...

WITH REINFORCEMENTS FROM OTHER PREFECTURES, WE'LL HAVE NEARLY 5,000 MEN BY EVENING.

EVEN SHISHIO WON'T BE ABLE TO RUN WILD THEN.



DON'T WORRY. IT'LL BE FINE.

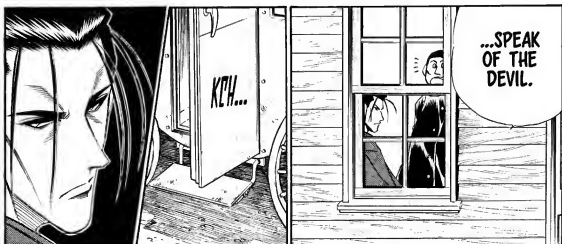
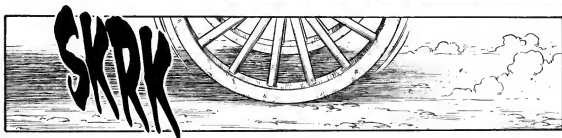
HEAVEN'S ON OUR SIDE, IT SEEMS.

HUH?



I'VE REASSIGNED AS MANY MEN AS I CAN TO KYOTO PATROL... PER YOUR REQUEST, FUJITA-KUN.

THANKS.





GOING
BACK TO
BEING
HITOKIRI,
THEN?

FIDGET
FUJITA-
KUN...?
FIDGET
WHAT'S
THE
STORY
?



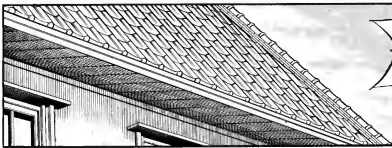
WE'LL
SEE...

HMM.

WHATEVER.
I'VE URGENT
BUSINESS.
COME UP.

GOOD
TIMING.
TOO. THE
LOUDMOUTH'S
OUT TO
LUNCH.

HEH



...SET
FIRE TO
KYOTO?!



SO
SAYS YOUR
CAPTIVE,
CHÔ OF
THE TEN
SWORDS.

MM.

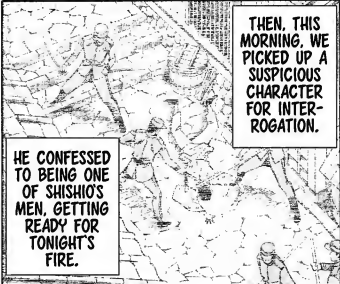


THE "GREAT
KYOTO FIRE"
IS TO BE
SPARKED
TONIGHT AT
11:59.

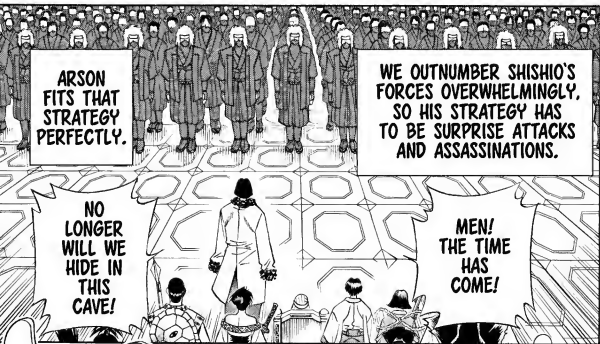
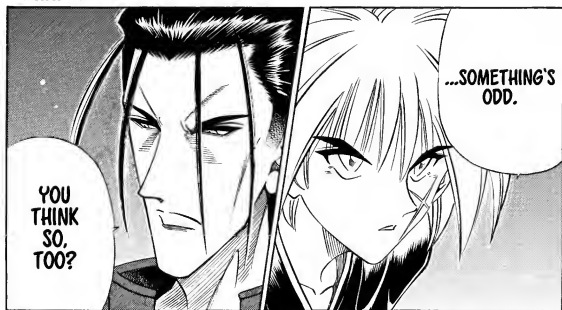
THAT
SEEMS
CERTAIN.



HE CONFESSED
TO BEING ONE
OF SHISHIO'S
MEN, GETTING
READY FOR
TONIGHT'S
FIRE.



THEN, THIS
MORNING, WE
PICKED UP A
SUSPICIOUS
CHARACTER
FOR INTER-
ROGATION.



SO I'VE BEEN
WAITING FOR
ONE OF THE
JUPPONGATANA
TO COME HERE
AND ASSASSINATE
THEIR COMRADE,
CHŌ.

SECRECY
IS A MATTER
OF LIFE AND
DEATH TO
THEM.

IT'S AS IF
THEY
WANTED US
TO GET THAT
INFORMATION.

...WE
STRIKE!

NOW
...

BUT IT
HASN'T
HAPPENED.

RAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

...THERE'S
SOMETHING
BEHIND THE
KYOTO FIRE
THAT EVEN THE
TEN SWORDS
HAVEN'T BEEN
TOLD.

PER-
HAPS...

IN
ANY
CASE...
...SOME-
THING
IS
OFF.



...OTHER
OBJECTIVE.

PERHAPS
SOME...



SHISHIO
HAS A DRAMATIC
STREAK. THE
"OTHER OBJECTIVE"
MUST HAVE A
SIMILAR QUALITY
OF "PLAY" TO IT.

THEY'RE
MODELING
THEIR FIRE
AFTER THE
IKEDA-YA
INCIDENT.



...WAIT.

WHAT IS
THEIR...?

BUT
WHAT
?



A
AP!



IF SHISHIO
IS TRYING TO
MAKE SOME IRONIC
COMMENTARY,
THEN THE REAL
TARGET OF HIS
ATTACK...

...SHÖGUN TOKUGAWA
YOSHINOBU DECEIVED
HIS OWN MEN, AND
SAILED FOR EDO FROM
OSAKA BAY. THAT
WAS THE MAIN
REASON FOR THE
IMPERIAL ARMY'S
VICTORY.

SAITÖ...AT THE
TURNING POINT
OF THE
BAKUMATSU,
DURING THE
BOSHIN WAR AND
THE BATTLE
OF TOBA-
FUSHIMI...



THE KYOTO
FIRE IS ONLY
A DIVERSION!
HIS TRUE
OBJECTIVE IS
TO FIRE AT
TOKYO FROM
THE SEA!



THAT'S
WHY HE
LEAKED
INFORMATION
TO US!



YES...IF HE CAN
LURE ENOUGH
MANPOWER
HERE...

...DRAW
EVERYONE'S
ATTENTION WITH
A BATTLE BETWEEN
HIS MEN AND THE
POLICE...

THEY'VE
GOT
TO BE
STOPPED
!

IF THEY
SET SAIL,
IT WON'T
MATTER!

HIS TARGET
IS TOKYO,
THE HEART
OF THE
GOVERN-
MENT.

AND
I FELL
FOR IT.

WE
MUST
HURRY!

THERE'S
NO
TIME!

4/K!

MA
CH
K

PLANNING
ON
DITCHING
ME AGAIN?

WOKK



S...
SANO
...

AST

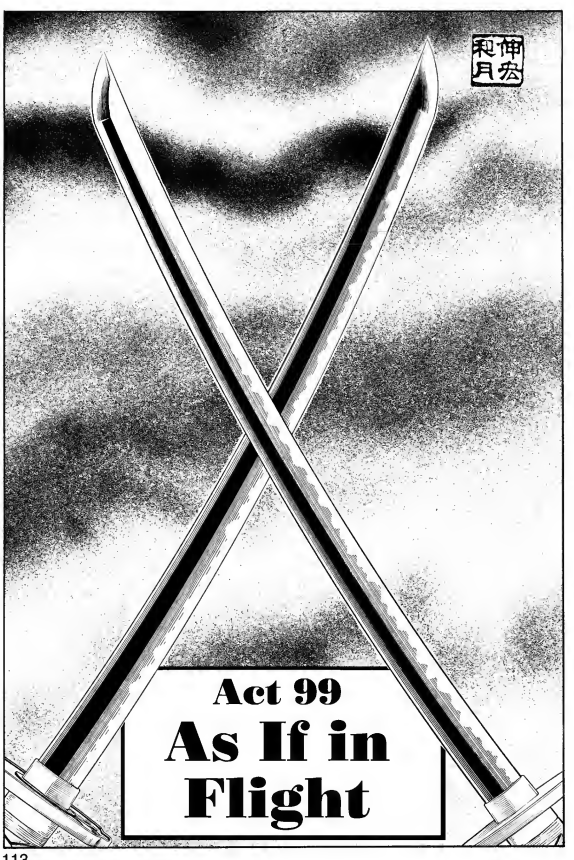
UH-UH.
NOT THIS
TIME.





Rurouni Kenshin



A black and white illustration featuring two long, curved swords crossed in an 'X' shape. The blades are highly reflective, showing highlights and shadows. The hilts are visible at the bottom. The background is a dramatic, cloudy sky with dark, swirling patterns. In the top right corner, there is a square seal with Japanese characters. At the bottom center, a white rectangular box contains the text 'Act 99 As If in Flight'.

伸
和
月
宏

Act 99
As If in
Flight



WITH YOU
YELLING,
WE CAN'T
TALK.

SHUT
IT
AWHILE,
HUH?

SAITŌ,
WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING?!



WE
OUTNUMBER
SHISHIO TEN
TIMES.

WITH
THAT FORCE,
WE SHOULD
AT LEAST BE
ABLE TO STOP
THE FIRE.

5,000
POLICEMEN
HAVE BEEN
ASSIGNED
TO KYOTO.

TO
CONTINUE...



THE POLICE
CAN STOP
500 SOLDIERS,
BUT NOT 500
SPARKS.

BUT
WHAT
WAS IT?

DON'T WORRY.
I'M HAVING
IT
DELIVERED.

THAT
LETTER
BEFORE
WE
LEFT...



HEY.
OMASU-
SAN.

...WE'LL
NEED THE
AID OF
THOSE WHO'VE
PROTECTED
THE CITY
SINCE LONG
BEFORE THE
BAKUMATSU.

TO KEEP
FIRE FROM
ENGULFING
KYOTO...

屋 葵
利子

WHAT
IS IT,
MISA—
—“OKA-
SHIRA,”
I MEAN.

WHAT
ARE YOU
THINKING
?!

HOW
WOULD
I
KNOW?!

WELL...
UMM...

HOW
MUCH IS A
BLACK-MARKET
GATLING GUN
THESE DAYS
ANYWAY?



BUT
...

HEY.
MISAO-
CHAN?



...IF WE'RE
GOING TO
FIGHT SHISHIO'S
MEN, I THOUGHT
MAYBE WE
SHOULD HAVE
SOME EXTRA
POWER.

I'D RATHER
NOT HAVE
TO DEPEND
ON FIREARMS.
BUT...



IT STILL
ONLY TOOK
FOUR
ONIWABANSHŪ
TO DEFEAT
IT.

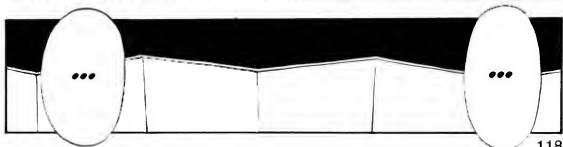
GATLING GUNS
ARE INCREDIBLY
POWERFUL.
PROBABLY THE
MOST POWERFUL
WEAPONS YOU
CAN USE AGAINST
PEOPLE.

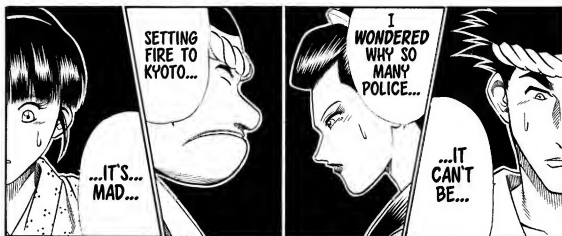


OH,
THERE
THEY
ARE.

I THINK
THAT'S WHY
KENSIN
RESPECTS YOU
SO MUCH.

THE TRUE
STRENGTH
OF THE
ONIWABANSHŪ
ISN'T
SOMETHING
YOU CAN BUY,
IS IT?





CONTACT
EVERYONE
IN
KYOTO!

RELEASE
THE
CARRIER
PIGEONS!

KUROJŌ,
SHIROJŌ,
MASU-
KAMI,
ŌMIME!

EVERYONE,
INTO YOUR
SHINOBI
ROBES!

VP

STILL...
FIGHTING
ALONGSIDE
ONIWABANSHŪ
...

IT'S THE
LAST THING
I WOULD'VE
THOUGHT,
WHEN WE
FOUGHT 'EM
IN TOKYO...!

YOU
KNOW
IT!

IT'S TIME FOR
THE KYOTO
ONIWABANSHŪ
TO ACT!



I'VE
SENT A
TELEGRAM
TO
OSAKA...

BUT
MOST OF
THEIR MEN
ARE IN KYOTO.
SO A SIEGE IS
IMPOSSIBLE.



AND THIS
CARNAGE WON'T
GET THERE
UNTIL MIDNIGHT.



THERE'LL BE
NO TIME FOR
A THOROUGH
SEARCH...



EVEN IF
WE SCREW
UP, TOKYO
WON'T GO
DOWN IN
ONE OR TWO
CANNON
BLASTS.

ALL WE
CAN DO
NOW IS
HIT THEM
WITH ALL
WE'VE
GOT!



ALL
WE CAN
DO IS DO
WHAT WE
CAN!

!

WE
HAVE
NO
TIME!

BE
SWIFT
IN
YOUR
ACTIONS
...

...AS
IF IN
FLIGHT
!!!



DIDN'T I
TELL YOU
TO SHUT IT,
BLOCK-
HEAD?
WE'RE
TALKING,
HERE.

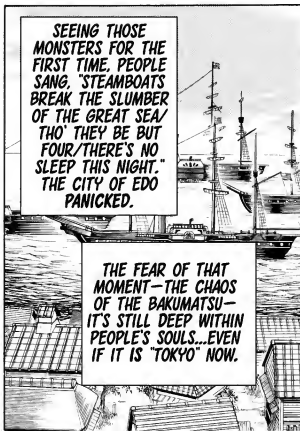
ONCE, YOU
GET AWAY
WITH!! BUT
TWICE--!!

URK
?!



SANO...
DESTROYING
TOKYO ISN'T
WHAT
SHISHIO'S
AFTER.

JA BB



SEEING THOSE
MONSTERS FOR THE
FIRST TIME, PEOPLE
SANG, 'STEAMBOATS
BREAK THE SLUMBER
OF THE GREAT SEA/
THO' THEY BE BUT
FOUR/THERE'S NO
SLEEP THIS NIGHT.'
THE CITY OF EDO
PANICKED.

IN THE 6TH
YEAR OF KAEI,
PERRY ARRIVED
AT THE SHORE
OF URAGA. THE
BLACK SHIPS
MARKED THE
START OF THE
BAKUMATSU.

THE FEAR OF THAT
MOMENT--THE CHAOS
OF THE BAKUMATSU--
IT'S STILL DEEP WITHIN
PEOPLE'S SOULS...EVEN
IF IT IS "TOKYO" NOW.



...THE CITY
WILL FALL
INTO
PANDEMONIUM.

EVEN IF ONE
UNKNOWN SHIP
APPEARS AND
STARTS FIRING
AT TOKYO...

YEAH
...

...

THE
CURRENT
GOVERNMENT
WOULD
HAVE NO
POWER TO
QUELL
IT...
...AND
TOKYO
WOULD
BECOME A
LAWLESS
ZONE. THE
GOVERNMENT
WOULD STOP
FUNCTION-
ING.

THE
SITUATION
GETS WORSE
WITH EVERY
HOUR.

I
GET
IT.

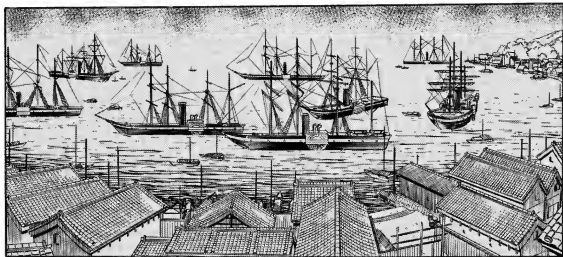
...AS
IF IN
FLIGHT
!!

AND
THAT'S
WHY WE
MUST
HURRY...





OSAKA BAY







UWA?

WAS IT
MY LOOKS
YOU FELL
IN LOVE
WITH?

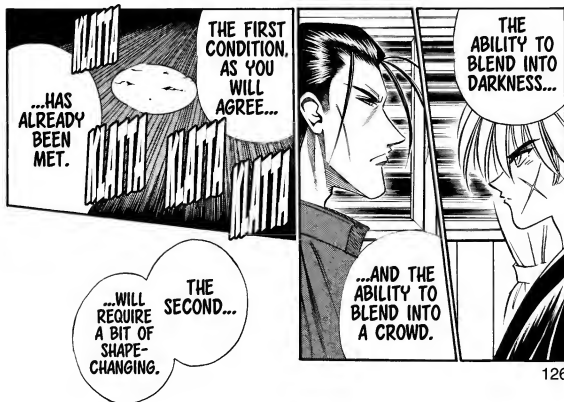
TELL
ME,
YUMI.

GLINT



...THAT TWO
THINGS MAKE
THE JOB OF
HITOKIRI
EASIER.

LIFE
DURING THE
BAKUMATSU
TAUGHT
ME...



...HAS
ALREADY
BEEN
MET.

THE FIRST
CONDITION,
AS YOU
WILL
AGREE...

THE
ABILITY TO
BLEND INTO
DARKNESS...

...WILL
REQUIRE
A BIT OF
SHAPE-
CHANGING.

THE
SECOND...

...AND THE
ABILITY TO
BLEND INTO
A CROWD.



IF SO,
TAKE A
LOOK...

...AT
WHAT'S
INSIDE
HERE.

WHAT
WOULD
SHISHIO
DO...?

SHISHIO
MAKOTO
TOOK THIS
ONE'S
PLACE AS
HITOKIRI.



OR DID
YOU FALL
FOR
WHAT'S
INSIDE
ME?



...KNOWS
IT LIKE
HIS OWN
PALM.

"HITOKIRI
BATTOSAI"...



...AS A
MERCHANT
VESSEL...

HE'D
DISGUISE
HIS
SHIP...





HOW
ABOUT
IT,
YUMI?

THIS
IS
OUR
PRIZE.

RENGOKU...
"PURGATORY."



IS
THIS
WORTHY
OF
YOUR
LOVE...?

...YES.





HŌJI,
WHAT'S
THE
TIME?

**HURRY!
LET'S SET
SAIL!**

WITH IT,
THE HATED
MEIJI
GOVERNMENT
IS FINISHED!

DON'T
BE SO
HASTY.

...AND 22
MINUTES.

ELEVEN
O'CLOCK...

...AND
RENGOKU
SETS
SAIL.

**THIRTY-SEVEN
MINUTES
UNTIL THE
FIRE BEGINS...**

**THIRTY-
SEVEN
MINUTES
UNTIL...**



**...IT ALL
COMES
TOGETHER.**



Rurouni Kenshin



The Great Kyoto Fire (Part I)

...IT'S
TIME.



REPORT
!!



OR THE
2ND
UNIT!

THERE ARE
TOO MANY
POLICE ALL
OVER KYOTO!
THE FIRST
UNIT CAN'T
ACT!



AND
THE
3RD
IS...

WHERE
ARE THE
FLAMES?!
THEY'RE
LATE!



DON'T BE
IMPATIENT.
FIRE DOESN'T
SPREAD THAT
EASILY.

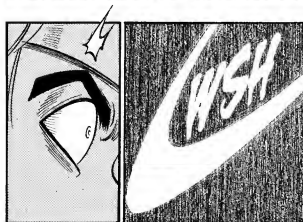


Act 100



The Great Kyoto Fire (Part I)









A PAWN CAN
ONLY MOVE
FORWARD!
GO!

WHAT
POINT
FEAR,
FOR A
GAME-
PIECE?
ESPECIALLY
FOR A
PAWN.



**CHARGE
!!**

**CH-
CHARGE!**

**STOP
THEM
!!**

**THEY
CAN'T
WIN!!**







WHY ARE
THERE SO
MANY OF
THEM—SO
LATE AT
NIGHT?

W-
WAIT
A
MINUTE!

HMPH!

**WE'VE
GOT
THIS.**



KAORU-SAN!
YAHIKO-KUN!
IT'S OFF TO
THE NEXT—

IT'S A
DIFFERENT
SHAPE...BUT
THE SAME
HEART.

ALL
RIGHT...

...EVERY-
ONE,
OFF!

OKINA-
SAN AND
THE REST
CHOSE
THIS
LIFE...

...AND
HERE'S THE
FRUIT OF
THEIR TEN
YEARS' WORK.

YEAH, THE
STRONG BOND
EVEN A
GATLING GUN
COULDN'T
CUT.

THAT'S
THE REAL
STRENGTH
OF THE
ONIWABAN-
SHU
ONMITSU.

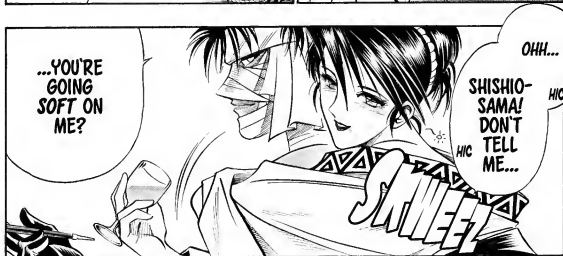




...IT'S
LATE. WE
SHOULD BE
SEEING FIRE
IN KYOTO
BY NOW.

WHAT'S
HOLDING
THEM
UP?





...MY
FIGHT
WITH
THAT
MAN.

I DO
FEEL SOME
REGRET AT
PUTTING
OFF...

...FIREWORKS
TO
CELEBRATE
OUR
DECLARATION
OF WAR.

THE FLAMES
THAT I'M
WAITING
FOR ARE
FIREWORKS...

AND
YET,
EVEN
SO...



DO YOU
SEE
FLAMES
?!

HŌJI-
SAMA!





A
CARRIAGE
COMING
THIS
WAY...
AND
FAST!



N-NO...
IT'S A
CARRIAGE!



IT'S THE ONLY
ONE LETTING
OFF STEAM
AND READY TO
SET SAIL!

...THAT
WOODEN
SHIP!

WHICH
ONE IS
SHISHIO'S
BOAT?!

KENSHIN!
WHICH
IS IT?!



STOP!





HAVE YOU
COME TO
SEE ME
OFF...

...H
I M U R A
B A T T Ō S A I
?!

Rurouni Kenshin





HEH.

YOUR
CLEVERNESS
SHALL BE
REWARDED...



...HIMURA
BATTŌSAI,
AND...



...SAITŌ
HAJIME,
AND...



?

...



WHO, HIM? JUST A FRIEND OF HIMURA'S.



...BUT ONE FAR WEAKER THAN THE OTHER TWO.

SAGARA SANOSUKE. A STREET FIGHTER WELL-KNOWN IN TOKYO...



Act 101

The Great Kyoto Fire (Part II)



SETTLE
THE SCORE
FROM
SHINGETSU
VILLAGE?

SO...

WHAT DO
WE DO,
SHISHIO-
SAMA?



AND
PREPARE
TO GET
RID OF
THE
OUTER
LAYER.

HŌJI,
GET
EVERYONE
INSIDE.

!

OF
COURSE,
I CAN'T
LOOK AS
THOUGH
I'M
RUNNING
AWAY.

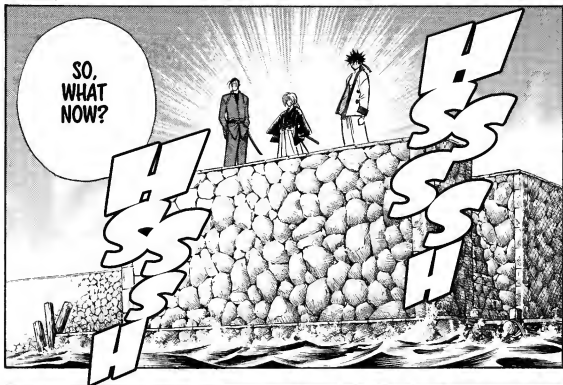
I'D LOVE
TO...BUT
WE CAN'T
WASTE THE
TIME
HERE.

...AND, ONCE
THEY'VE
SEEN THE
FUTILITY,
THEN WE'LL
LEAVE.

WE'LL
SHOW THEM
WHAT
THEY'RE UP
AGAINST...

GLINT







IF YOU
DON'T KNOW,
YOU'RE AN
EVEN BIGGER
IDIOT.

YOU'RE STARTING
TO WORRY ME,
HERE.

AGAIN WITH
THE INSULTS!
WHAT'S SO
IDiotic
ABOUT...?

NOW,
NOW...

RRG

RRG

RRG

YOU
IDIOT.

SANO...EVEN
WITHOUT IGNITION,
ONCE IT'S
UNDERWATER,
THE GUNPOWDER
WILL BE WET.

NEW
DESIGN OR
NOT, IT'LL
NEVER GO
OFF.

KRAK

!

SO...
IDIOT
...

...YOU
JUST
COOL
YOUR
HEELS
HERE
TILL THE
POLICE
ARRIVE.

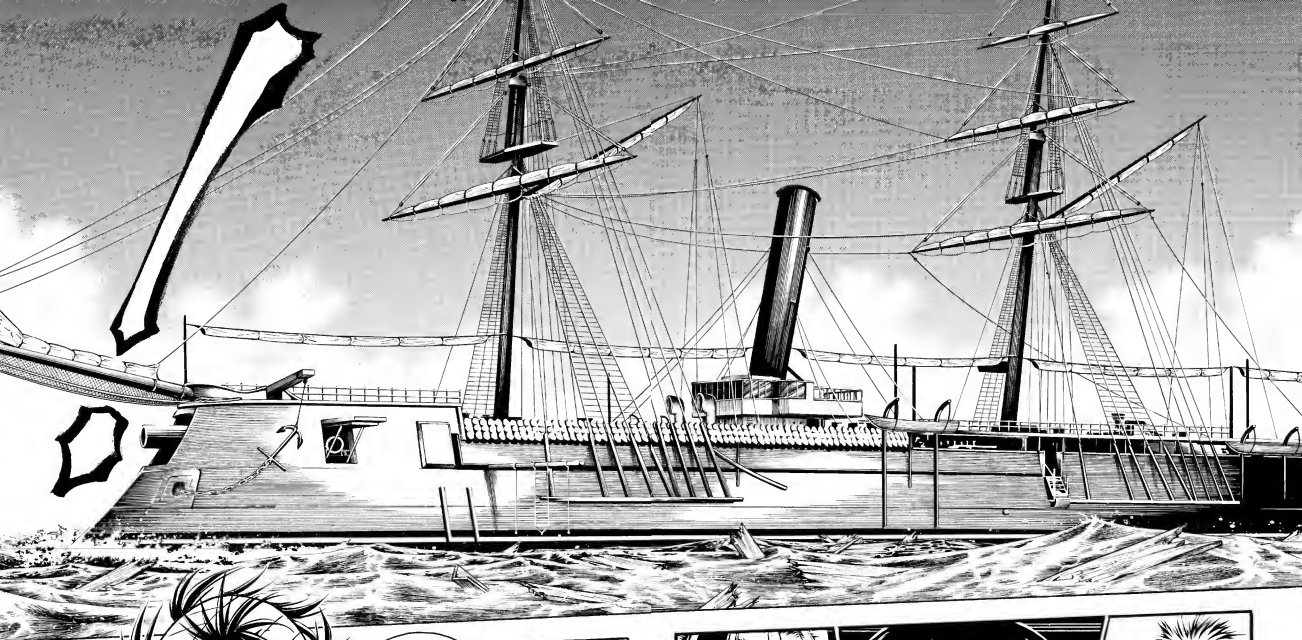


DID A
CANNON
BLOW?!

...WH...
WHAT?!

NO...

SHISHIO'S
SHIP
SELF-DESTRUCT-
ED?!



IT
WOULD
BE A
SHAME
IF YOU
WEREN'T
SURPRISED.

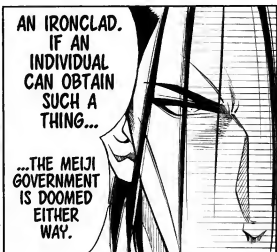
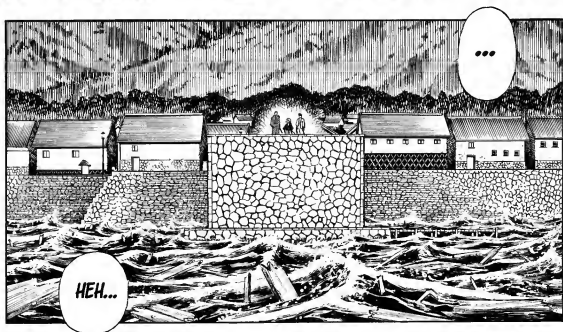
FULLY
3/5 OF MY
RESOURCES
HAVE BEEN
PUT INTO THIS
IRONCLAD,
RENGOKU.

SNORT



YOU
SEEM
SURPRISED.





...GO AROUND
BEHIND
THEM, AND
DESTROY
THEIR
ENGINE.

YOU
GRAB A
SMALL
BOAT...

SANO, SAITŌ WILL
HELP THIS ONE
LURE THEIR
CANNONS TOWARD
US.

KRA

FIRE!

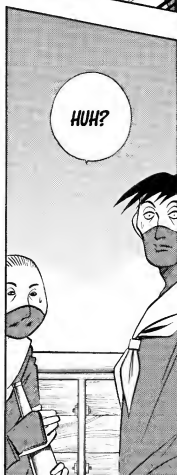
**LET'S
GO!!**







**FIRST
CANNON
HIT!**



HUH?



**NO, THAT'S
ENOUGH
OF THE
ARMSTRONG.**



**...AND
MAKE
IT
QUICK.**

**PREPARE
THE
GATLING
INSTEAD
...**

GLINT



**SHALL
WE FIRE
ANOTHER,
SIR?**



...EXCEPT
THAT
YOU
TOOK
IT TOO
LIGHTLY.

A FINE
CHARGE,
THERE...



YOU
MAY READ MY
INTENTION...
BUT IT WORKS
THE OTHER
WAY, TOO.

I CAN
SEE YOUR
PLAN
FORMING,
AS WELL.





SANO!!

GATLING
GUN,
FIRE
!!

I KNEW ALL
ALONG THAT
YOU WERE
JUST A
DIVERSION.



FSSSH

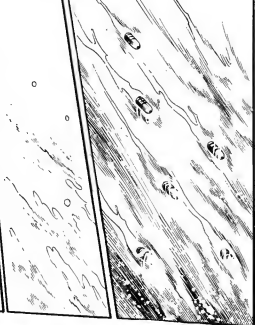


BB BB
BB BB
BBBB BHH





◀ READ
THIS
WAY ▶



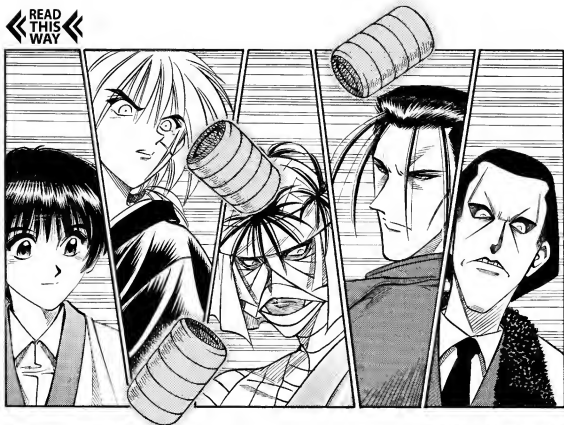
Rurouni Kenshin



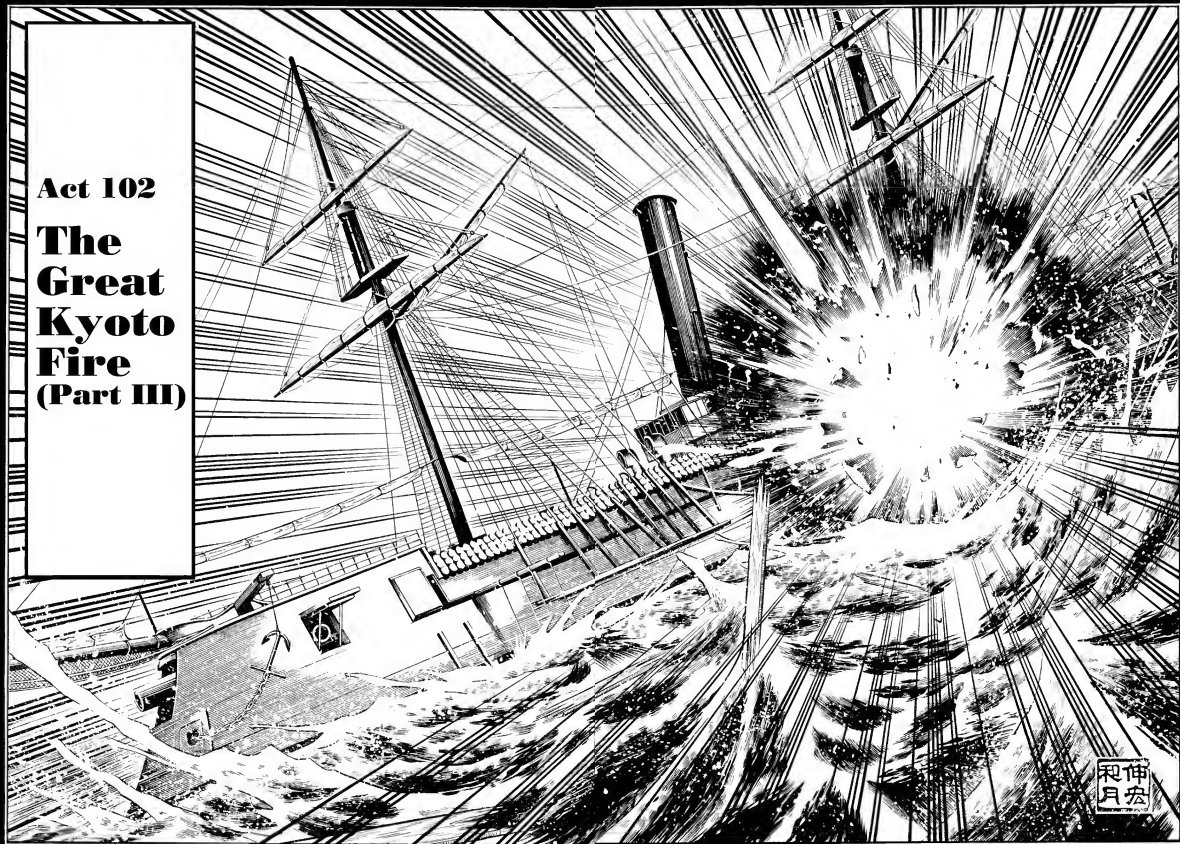
Act 102
The Great Kyoto Fire (Part III)

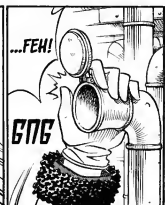
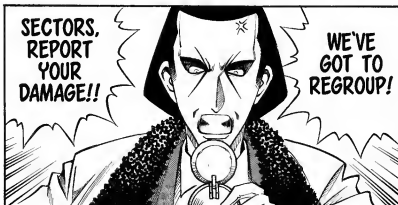






Act 102
The
Great
Kyoto
Fire
(Part III)







**FIRE'S
BREAKING
OUT—WE
CAN'T
CONTAIN
IT!**

**THIS
IS
THE
STERN!**

HŌJI-SAMA?!

HŌJI-SAMA,
PLEASE
ORDER
THE
EVACUA-
TION!

oooooooooooo

BAM

IT'S
NOT
JUST
HIM.

CURSE
HIM...

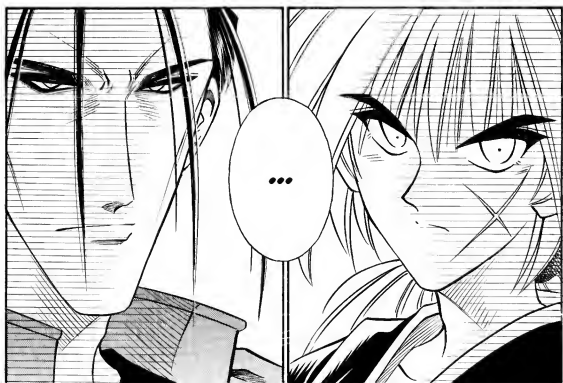
ALL THAT
EFFORT, PUT
INTO *RENGOKU*...
ALL THOSE
WEAPONS,
PERSONALLY
CHOSEN...

I REFUSE
TO LOSE TO
AN IGNORANT
THUG LIKE
THAT!

IT WAS THAT
MAN'S ARRIVAL
THAT UNDOED
US.

oooooooooooo

oooooooooooo





SAITŌ
HAJIME
PREPARED A
BRILLIANT
COUNTER-PLAN
WITH THE
RESOURCES
OF THE
POLICE.

HIMURA
BATTŌSAI
SAW THROUGH
MY PLAN AND
REALIZED
THE
LOCATION
OF OUR
SHIP.



BUT IT
WAS I WHO
TOOK THEM
LIGHTLY.

WE WERE
DEFEATED
BY THE
CARELESS-
NESS OF
SHISHIO
MAKOTO!



SHISHIO-
SAN.

THE
SCORE
FROM
SHINGETSU
?



SHALL
WE?



SETA
SŌJIRO....!



...BUT I
HAVE REALIZED
THAT, IN ORDER
TO TAKE THIS
COUNTRY, I'LL NEED
TO KILL YOU
THREE FIRST.

RENGOKU
WAS A
HIGH PRICE
TO PAY...

IN
OTHER
WORDS,
OUR
LAIR.

THE PLACE
MUST BE THE
SHRINE OF SIX
GATES, LOCATED
MIDWAY UP
MT. HIEI,
ON THE
NORTHEAST
SIDE.

FINE...
ONLY...

ONLY
?

WE
WILL MEET
YOU...THE
JUPPONGATANA
AND I
ALONE!

THERE,
WE WILL
HAVE NO
INTER-
RUPTIONS.

R
M
M
M

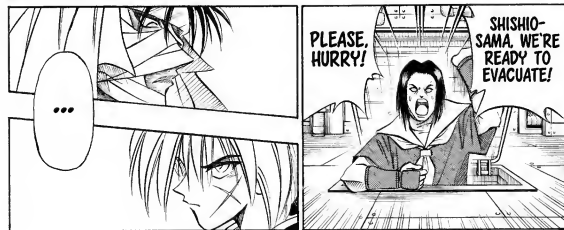
N
M
M
M

THERE'S
STILL TIME
BEFORE THE
SHIP SINKS.

NOT
TO BE
DIFFICULT...

...BUT
WOULDN'T
TWO-ON-TWO
BE
QUICKER?

...TEN
AGAINST
THREE,
THEN.



FROM
HERE
ON...

NOW, THOUGH,
YOU'VE BECOME
A DIVERSION
WORTH RISKING
MY LIFE
FOR.

BATTŌSAI,
THEN AND
NOW, YOU
REMAIN...

...ONLY A
DIVERSION
ALONG THE
WAY TO
TAKING THE
COUNTRY.

...I WILL
BE ON
GUARD.

HO
OO
OO
OO

...WHEN
READY.

COME
AT ME...

THEY
WON'T
LEAVE
WITHOUT
SHISHIO.

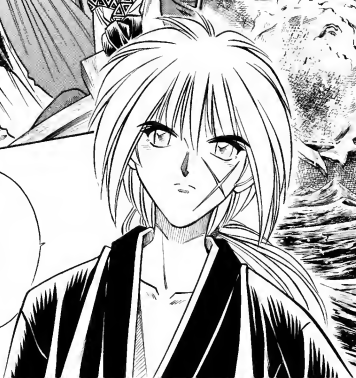
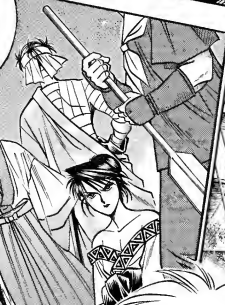
IF WE
FIGHT HERE,
THEIR ESCAPE
WILL BE
DELAYED,
AND SOME
WILL DIE.

THE MEN
ON THIS SHIP
ARE PROBABLY
THE MOST
LOYAL OF
SHISHIO'S
MEN.

FRIEND
OR FOE,
IT'S BEST
TO AVOID
MAKING
VICTIMS.

HSSH HSSH

HSSH





BUT
INNOCENT
PEOPLE
WILL NOT
FALL IN
THIS ONE'S
BATTLES...

...NOT
EVER.



YOU'RE TOO
SOFT, AS
USUAL. CAN
YOU BEAT
SHISHIO LIKE
THIS?

WHO
KNOWS
?



YESSSS!

VSH

EVEN WITHOUT
PLANNING, IT
CAME OUT THE
WAY YOU
WANTED IT
TO.



BRING ON
SHISHIO
MAKOTO!!

NEVER
FEAR,
SAGARA
SANOSUKE'S
HERE!



DOO

ON





GLOSSARY of the RESTORATION

A brief guide to select Japanese terms used in *Rurouni Kenshin*. Note that, both here and within the story itself, all names are Japanese style—i.e., last or “family” name first, with personal or “given” name following. This is both because *Kenshin* is a “period” story, as well as to decrease confusion—if we were to take the example of *Kenshin*’s *sakabatō* and “reverse” the format of the historically established assassin-name “*Hitokiri Battōsai*,” for example, it would make little sense to then call him “*Battōsai Himura*.”

Ishin Shishi

Loyalist or pro-Imperialist *patriots* who fought to restore the Emperor to his ancient seat of power

Juppongatana

Written with the characters for “ten” and “swords,” Shishio’s *Juppongatana* are literally that—the ten “swords” or generals he plans to use in his overthrow of Japan

Kamiya Kasshin-ryū

Sword-arts or *kenjutsu* school established by Kaoru’s father, who rejected the ethics of *Satsujin-ken* for *Katsujin-ken*

katana

Traditional Japanese longsword (curved, single-edge, worn cutting-edge up) of the samurai. Used primarily for slashing; can be wielded either one- or two-handed.

Katsujin-ken

“Swords that give life”; the sword-arts style developed over ten years by Kaoru’s father and founding principle of *Kamiya Kasshin-ryū*

Kawakami Gensai

Real-life, historical inspiration for the character of *Himura Kenshin*

kenjutsu

The art of fencing; sword arts; *kendō*

Bakumatsu

Final, chaotic days of the Tokugawa regime

-chan

Honorific. Can be used either as a diminutive (e.g., with a small child—“Little Hanako or Kentarō”), or with those who are grown, to indicate affection (“My dear...”)

dojo

Martial-arts training hall

-dono

Honorific. Even more respectful than *-san*; the effect in modern-day Japanese conversation would be along the lines of “Milord So-and-So.” As used by *Kenshin*, it indicates both respect and humility.

Edo

Capital city of the *Tokugawa Bakufu*; renamed *Tokyo* (“Eastern Capital”) after the Meiji Restoration

Himura Kenshin

Kenshin’s “real” name, revealed to Kaoru only at her urging

Hiten Mitsurugi-ryū

Kenshin’s sword technique, used more for defense than offense. An “ancient style that pits one against many,” it requires exceptional speed and agility to master.

hitokiri

An assassin. Famous swordsmen of the period were sometimes thus known to adopt “professional” names—*Kawakami Gensai*, for example, was also known as “*Hitokiri Gensai*.”

-sama

Honorific. The respectful equivalent of **-san**, **-sama** is used primarily in addressing persons of much higher rank than one's self...or, in a romantic sense, in addressing those upon whom one is crushing, wicked hard.

-san

Honorific. Carries the meaning of "Mr.," "Ms.," "Miss," etc., but used more extensively in Japanese than its English equivalent (note that even an enemy may be addressed as **"-san"**).

Satsujin-ken

"Swords that give death"; a style of swordsmanship rejected by Kaoru's father

Shinsengumi

"True to the old ways and risking their lives to preserve the old **shōgunate** system," the popular view of the Shinsengumi ("newly elected group") was that of swordsmen as charismatic as they were skilled. Of note: Thanks to the popularity of the NHK drama of the same name, several historical sites in Japan are reportedly enjoying record attendance levels of late.

shōgun

Feudal military ruler of Japan

shōgunate

See **Tokugawa Bakufu**

Tokugawa Bakufu

Military feudal government which dominated Japan from 1603 to 1867

Tokyo

The renaming of **"Edo"** to **"Tokyo"** is a marker of the start of the **Meiji Restoration**

Wolves of Mibu

Nickname for the **Shinsengumi**, so called because of the town (Mibu) where they were first stationed

yatsuhashi

A traditional Japanese sweet and a Kyoto speciality

-kun

Honorific. Used in the modern day among male students, or those who grew up together, but another usage—the one you're more likely to find in **Rurouni Kenshin**—is the "superior-to-inferior" form, intended as a way to emphasize a difference in status or rank, as well as to indicate familiarity or affection.

kunoichi

Female ninja. In that they are not referred to as simply **"onmitsu"** (ninja), their special name suggests their relative scarcity

loyalists

Those who supported the return of the Emperor to power; **Ishin Shishi**

Meiji Restoration

1853-1868; culminated in the collapse of the **Tokugawa Bakufu** and the restoration of imperial rule. So called after Emperor Meiji, whose chosen name was written with the characters for "culture and enlightenment."

patriots

Another term for **Ishin Shishi**... and when used by Sano, not a flattering one

rurouni

Wanderer, vagabond

ryūshōsen

Sometimes translated as "Soaring-Dragon Flash," the **ryūshōsen** of Kenshin's Hiten Mitsurugi school is one of his special moves, and is also known as "Dragon Flight"

ryūkansen

Also translatable as "Winding-Dragon Flash," Kenshin's Hiten Mitsurugi school special move **ryūkansen** is given in here as "Dragon-Spiral Strike"

sakabatō

Reversed-edge sword (the dull edge on the side the sharp should be, and vice versa); carried by Kenshin as a symbol of his resolution never to kill again

IN THE NEXT VOLUME...

The Great Kyoto Fire behind them (and casualties relatively few), Kenshin and the others must weigh their next move carefully. The Kyoto-based spy group Oniwabanshū may be trustworthy, but their leader—Shinomori Aoshi—is not. Elsewhere, the monomaniacal madman, Shishio Makoto, makes plans for what is not only practical to his long-range goals, but for also his own, personal pleasure: a one-on-one, to-the-death battle to the finish...



Available in April 2005

